

REMARKS

Claims 1 and 3-13 are pending in the above-identified application. Claims 1 and 3 have been amended and claim 2 has been cancelled. Claim 1 is independent. Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

New Matter under 35 USC 112

Claim 13 is rejected under 35 USC 112, first paragraph, as containing subject matter which was not described in the specification. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Examiner asserts that the recitation “wherein a thickness of the surface coating layer is 3 to 30 μm ” in claim 13 is not supported by the Specification. As the Examiner will note, claim 13 finds support at page 12, lines 21 and 22 of the original specification or page 13, lines 13 and 14 of the after-submitted specification with proper spacing. Specifically, the above portions of the specification state “the thickness of the surface coating layer is set to not less than 3 μm nor more than 30 μm .”

In view of the above remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 13 has support in the specification as filed. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the Examiner’s rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections under 35 USC §§ 102 and 103

Claims 1, 4, 5 and 7-13 stand rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Schlueter, Jr. et al. (U.S. 5,952,301). Claim 6 stands rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schlueter, Jr. et al. (U.S. 5,952,301) in view of Nakazawa et al (U.S. 6,852,400). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

As the Examiner will note, while not conceding to the appropriateness of the Examiner’s rejection, but merely to expedite prosecution of the present application, independent claim 1 has

been amended to include the subject matter of dependent claim 2, which has been cancelled. The Examiner indicated that claim 2 is directed to allowable subject matter. In view of this, independent claim 1 and dependent claims 4, 5 and 7-13 should be in condition for allowance.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1, 4, 5 and 6-13 clearly define the present invention over the references relied on by the Examiner. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the Examiner's rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102 and 103 are respectfully requested.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 2 and 3 have been indicated by the Examiner as being directed to allowable subject matter. Applicants appreciate this indication by the Examiner. As mentioned above, independent claim 1 has been amended to include the allowable subject matter of dependent claim 2. In addition, dependent claim 3 has been amended to depend from independent claim 1. Therefore, all of claims 1 and 3-13 should be in condition for allowance.

Favorable consideration and early allowance of the present application are respectfully requested.

If any questions arise in the above matters, please contact Applicant's representative, Andrew D. Meikle (Reg. No. 32,868), in the Washington Metropolitan Area at the phone number listed below.

Application No. 10/617,711
Amendment dated April 10, 2006
Reply to Office Action of January 10, 2006

Docket No.: 2927-0150P

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Dated: April 10, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

By

Andrew D. Meikle

Registration No.: 32,868

BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP

8110 Gatehouse Road

Suite 100 East

P.O. Box 747

Falls Church, Virginia 22040-0747

(703) 205-8000

Attorney for Applicant